

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. No additional fee is required for this Amendment as the number of independent claims has not changed, and the total number of claims has not changed.

Amendment to the Specification

Applicants amended the first full paragraph on page 19 to correct typographical errors.

Amendment to the Claims

Applicants amended independent Claim 1 to recite the superabsorbent material is integrally bonded to the fibers and independent Claim 57 to recite the superabsorbent material is fused onto the fibers. The limitation "via a crosslinker" has been removed, as the Examiner indicated it would not be considered. Support for this Amendment can be found throughout Applicants' Specification, for example, at page 19, first full paragraph. No new matter has been added to the claims by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

The rejection of Claims 1-3, 6, 8-11, 13, 14, 17-22, 25-30, 32-34, 41, 45-60, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 75, 76, 78-80, and 87 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Tanzer et al., U.S. Patent 6,429,350, is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner says that because the Tanzer et al. Patent discloses spraying an adhesive over the pocketed layer material, the superabsorbent material

would be sprayed with adhesive and thus be bonded to the fibers. To clarify the claimed invention, Applicants amended independent Claim 1 to recite the superabsorbent material is integrally bonded to the fibers, and amended independent Claim 57 to recite the superabsorbent material is fused onto the fibers. The above Amendment clarifies the structure of the claimed invention, and differentiates the bonding of the superabsorbent material from any adhesive bonding occurring in the Tanzer et al. Patent.

Applicants' claimed invention is desirably formed using a superabsorbent precursor that is applied, such as by printing, to the fibers of the surge material. The precursor is then crosslinked to integrally bond with, or fuse onto, the fibers, resulting in a novel and beneficial superabsorbent/fiber structure, as shown in the figures. The above clarifying Amendment recites limitations that reflect the structure of Applicants' invention, while differentiating Applicants' invention from any adhesive bonded superabsorbent particles of the Tanzer et al. Patent. Applicants would appreciate the Examiner contacting the undersigned if any further or alternative clarifying amendment is deemed necessary to place this Patent Application in condition for allowance.

As the Tanzer et al. Patent does not disclose a superabsorbent material integrally bonded with, or fused onto, fibers of a surge material in a discrete region, as in Applicants' claimed invention, the Tanzer et al. Patent does not anticipate Claims 1 and 57. The remaining claims depend from one of Claims 1 and 57, and are thus patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above.

Serial No.: 10/036,746

Docket No.: KCC-15,796

Conclusion

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not resolved in this response, Applicants' undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

Applicants sincerely believe that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully request early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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